

Estate Regeneration Fund

A Bid from Havant Borough Council

Leigh Park Centre – Community & Wellbeing Hub

23 December 2016

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Leigh Park Centre – Community & Wellbeing Hub Project - HCA Estate Regeneration Fund Bid: December 2016

Summary

This is a bid for £320,000 of Enabling Capital Grant Funding for detailed feasibility work to create a tangible, viable and community supported plan for the redevelopment of two areas of land in public ownership. The 1.11 hectares of land currently provide a public car park, a community centre, Library and health facilities. The redevelopment of the land would be to re-provide community facilities that are financially sustainable for the operators and landowners, that meets the needs of the community and provides the opportunity for social transformation in a location that experiences high levels of multiple deprivation (in worst 10% nationally). The rationalisation of the community facilities creates the opportunity to redevelop the sites, develop community engagement and provide 150+ new residential units on the sites. These new homes would be aimed at starter homes to introduce a new aspirational tenure type into the area and make a positive contribution to the Borough's housing need and Local Plan housing target.

The principle has the support of the three key landowners; Havant Borough Council, Hampshire County Council and NHS property services; together they will provide public leadership of the project and importantly the pre-lets to sustain the project.

Pre-feasibility work has been undertaken that engaged with and has the support of the community on the principles. The aim is to secure the funding that will enable the procurement, within 2016/17, of a professional project lead and the assembly of the multi-disciplinary team required to undertake this level of work. These are skills that a small council such as Havant BC do not have and therefore there will be significant learning opportunities for the officers involved in the project.

Without this public investment to de-risk the creation of a sustainable community & wellbeing Hub the existing facilities will continue to decline due to their financial unsustainability and no new homes will be provided in this key location.

Background

Leigh Park is one of the UK's largest post war housing estates. Originally envisaged as the "Garden City of the South", it was planned to accommodate those displaced from the bombing of Portsmouth in WW2.

A Map of where Leigh Park relative to the rest of Havant Borough is at Appendix 1.

Leigh Park now comprises some 11,136 homes with a population of 28,109. There is a variety of housing styles, typologies and tenures. Portsmouth City Council is the majority landowner and housing authority for the socially rented stock, whilst Havant Borough Council is the local planning and council tax authority. The councils, together with their partners, are increasingly working together to deliver additional housing (there is considerable potential for intensification on the estate), and provide better well being and life outcomes for residents and tenants. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation identify a number of Leigh Park wards in the worst 10% nationally, with the most deprived around the District Centre, which is the focus for this bid.

The aim of the bid is to substantially improve the estate's community facilities by relocating and consolidating these into Leigh Park's District Centre (embracing a "One Public Estate" approach with Hampshire County Council (HCC), and the NHS who together with Havant Borough Council (HBC) own all the land in the bid., which will then allow vacated sites to be intensified/redeveloped to include new housing, ideally for starter homes which would diversify the tenure mix.

Dunsbury Way is the focus of the majority of Leigh Park's community, health and social services facilities, consisting of churches, working men's club, Sure Start Centre, a large Community Centre, Family Centre, Library, Citizens Advice, Health & Orion Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service Centre Centre and underused council car parks all within a 100m stretch of road frontage.

The focus for the bid is on the triangle of land (0.8ha) (see Map 1) containing the Havant Borough Council owned Community Centre; the NHS owned Health & Orion Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service Centre and the Hampshire County Council owned Library together with the Tidworth Road car park (0.31ha) (see Map 2).

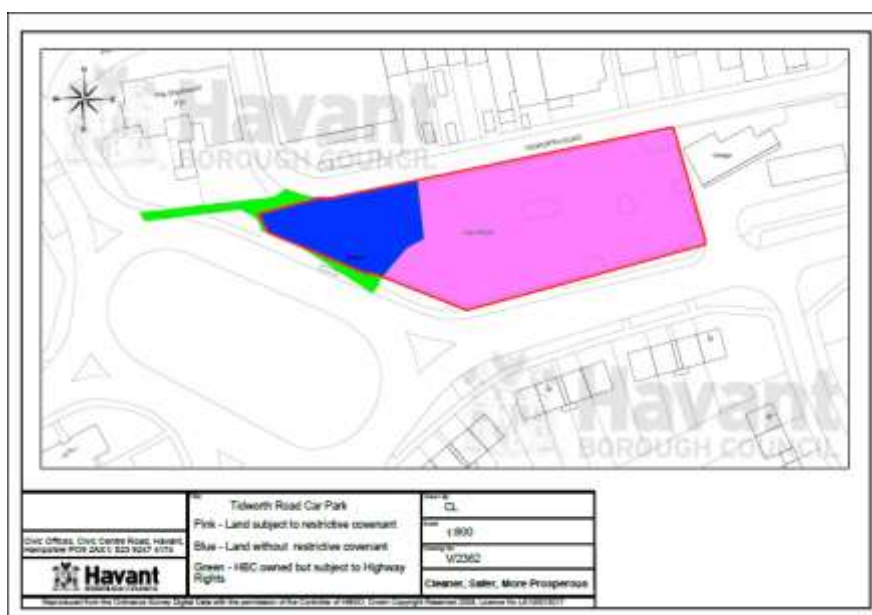


Map 1 – The Triangle

Edged Red = HBC freehold
 Edged Blue = NHS freehold
 Edged Green = HCC freehold

Yellow solid = Community Centre -edged orange = Park Families day nursery – Head Lease – Community First
 Pink solid = Making Space – craft workshops
 Purple solid = Apex Centre – Park Community School building trade training

Map 2 – Tidworth Road Car Park – HBC owned – with a covenant on the pink area with Portsmouth City Council restricting the use to car parking. Any re-development would therefore be subject to agreement with Portsmouth CC.



Our aim is to rationalise the community, health and social services facilities into a single modern “one stop” hub where services are connected to address well evidenced health and social issues in the area. Complementing that health/social transformation objective, the opportunity would release land for new homes to bring wider and aspirational housing choice, vitality and prosperity to Leigh Park Centre. The project would be squarely aimed at Starter Homes. Applying an appropriate density of 200 dwellings per hectare, there is potential for up to 200 new homes (1 & 2 bedrooms = 300+bedrooms) which would be a breakthrough product in the current Leigh Park housing market.

Addressing the Three Key Principles of Estate Regeneration

Community Engaged As Partners

Leigh Park is the community that receives highest levels of public support, from Havant BC alongside Portsmouth CC as the major landlord and Hampshire County Council as education authority serving the lowest achieving area in the county, adult services in terms of high numbers of vulnerable people, blue light services in terms of incidents and Public Health/NHS in terms of poor health outcomes.

The Pre-feasibility study undertaken in 2014 successfully engaged with the public in developing the principle of the community and wellbeing hub; getting to a point where a Community Land Trust was near to being created. As no further funding was forthcoming at the time the momentum fell off. This bid is the opportunity to rebuild that community momentum.

The ‘triangle site’ which is the focus of this bid is a well used community hub in terms of the community centre. The library has some of the lowest usage rates in the county and the doctors’ surgery is vacant, just leaving the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service Centre. Whilst the community centre is well used there is little community space left for hire it is not an efficient building it is a 1950/60s building that has been added to over the years producing a building that has seven different heating systems, many small rooms alongside good large rooms and kitchens that are not achieving full lettings. The built environment is outdated; no longer has fit for future purpose without upgrade, whilst some of the offer has been superseded by other local developments such as schools performance halls, e.g, park Community school. A formal audit of other local community spaces is a priority for this project. The way to create viable community facilities in the area will be to redevelop the building and alongside design a new modern vision for the Centre as a community hub in partnership with the community and local stakeholders.

In the last year the Community Association that ran the centre folded and [Community First](#) took on a 21 year lease from the Council. Community First is supportive of this bid and being the Head Lessee of the centre would be a key stakeholder. Community First has successfully bid to the Big Lottery in October 2016 to run a community event (‘Love Leigh Park’) to celebrate the past, present and future of Leigh Park and its community centre. The Love Leigh Park event scheduled for mid March 2016 provides an opportunity to kick start the future programme of community engagement envisaged in this bid. A small part of the Love Leigh Park event could promote the community engagement to understand what facilities they need and could be the platform for a viable social enterprise. The timing of the Community First event complements this bid and would feed into this project and provide a sound basis in the ongoing growth of community engagement. The relatively contained nature of the project and its focus on community and wellbeing means that there is an excellent focus for it to become a catalyst to renewed community engagement. This is important as there have been various historic government initiatives in Leigh Park, that have delivered limited change; the striving families in the area can therefore seem disengaged with public bodies.

Experian Mosaic analysis of Leigh Park indicates that the profile is predominantly Group M: Family Basics. The analysis shows that the best ways to engage with this group is through smartphones, Social media, particularly Facebook, as also evidenced in the Community First event consultation. These are areas that the Council has not well developed skills. This project provides an excellent opportunity to renew community engagement in Leigh Park in an effective way that brings new skills to the public bodies. As part of the redevelopment of the triangle there would be temporary loss of facilities, the community would have some protection as there are other facilities in the immediate area which could also be an opportunity for the other places to review their offer; adding further momentum to the transformation of the area.

Support and Leadership of the Local Authority

The current Havant Local Plan identifies Leigh Park as a key regeneration area where new high density development will be supported. The Council is working on the Local Plan 2036 and needs to try and identify sites for 11,250 homes. The Council is making innovative progress with its Local Plan 2036 and has recently approved a Housing Statement which effectively releases a number of greenfield sites for development ahead of the full local plan process. This focus on green field releases has been a major issue with community engagement on the local plan as public feel there should also be focus on the intensification of the core urban sites. In principle this is agreed and Havant BC recently permitted a 13 storey tower in Havant town centre as a move to fundamentally change the approach to development. Current market values in Havant BC are proving unviable to the market for high rise and this is particularly the case in Leigh Park which has our lowest values exist. This is major issue for the Council from the perspective of not getting new high quality & density development in highly sustainable locations and using up the few remaining green fields. The Council leadership is therefore very supportive of development that would produce new much needed homes in sustainable locations such as Leigh Park centre.

Havant BC as landowners of the community centre and the car park are not getting best value from these assets and would welcome ways to improve revenue and deliver capital receipts alongside an improved social benefits offer.

Hampshire County Council has confirmed their support for the inclusion of the library in the project. Similarly the Head of Finance at South East Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group has confirmed support for the principle. The option that the NHS is focused on is the Hub and Spoke model of care with a possible new Spoke at Leigh Park centre providing prevention and self management and extended primary care.

The support of the public bodies to continue to be part of the project is therefore assured. Hampshire CC and the NHS have confirmed that they wish to continue with library and health facilities in the location, therefore guaranteeing critical pre-lets for future rents to sustain the project.

Willingness to Work with the Private Sector

Havant Borough Council has a good reputation as a Council that works positively with the private sector and is very keen to continue to develop that further. It is at the heart of the financial sustainability of the council. This is demonstrated through the fact that the Council has a Joint Venture with Norse to carry out all the Council's waster and ground maintenance work – the JV is called [Norse SE](#).

Havant Borough Council is a partner in the innovative [Five Council's contract](#) with Vale of White Horse, South Oxfordshire, Mendip and Hart Councils with Capita to provide a range of council services. These include HR, IT, Finance and Property.

Havant BC continues to seek opportunities to work in partnership with the private sector and is in discussion with development investors, including nationally respected leaders who have visited the Leigh Park opportunity and confirmed that due to the low sales/rental values there is limited/if any scope for new development without public funding support to de-risk investment by demonstrating a sustainable scheme through detailed feasibility work.

Bid Proposal

The bid is for £320,000 of enabling grant to de-risk the early stages of this regeneration scheme. This public investment will focus community engagement and private/public investors to deliver improved social outcomes, transform the existing disconnected community, social and health services and create 150+ new homes.

The financial detail of the bid would enable the proposal is to achieve an RIBA stage 2 and a half proposal on the traingle site; that is building outlines that fulfill the needs of the community and users, without the

detail of full internals and public realm. Work has already been done, with the community on the principle of the approach.

Havant BC has undertaken some initial viability work on the relatively underused Tidworth Road Car Park. This asset generates less than £30,000 p.a. in ticket sales, with costs of servicing and maintaining the car park it is making minimal net gain for the council if anything at all. There is a larger council car park nearby which serves the district shopping centre. The site is in a prominent location forming the 'entrance' to Leigh Park centre but as part of a poor public realm. The development of the car park for residential purposes could deliver some capital benefits to the Council whilst providing new homes. Initial feasibility work was included in the original project which proposed 33 new homes and projected a residual land value that would be subject to a covenant between Portsmouth CC and Havant BC for use as a car park to be negotiated to remove the covenant creating a level of return that is not attractive. However, all potential options requires detailed testing. Testing to achieve outline consent, potentially for higher density housing, higher returns could be achieved which would make a viable scheme. Again the bid would provide the expertise to engage with the community on the site and to de-risk it for private investment.

Whilst the bid is focused on bringing together specialist consultants the landowners and stakeholder involvement will bring learning opportunities to those officers involved which will benefit the overall project going forward to implementation. Particular skills in Project management, feasibility, viability appraisal, investment packaging and social media campaigning will be developed; adding significant value to the Council.

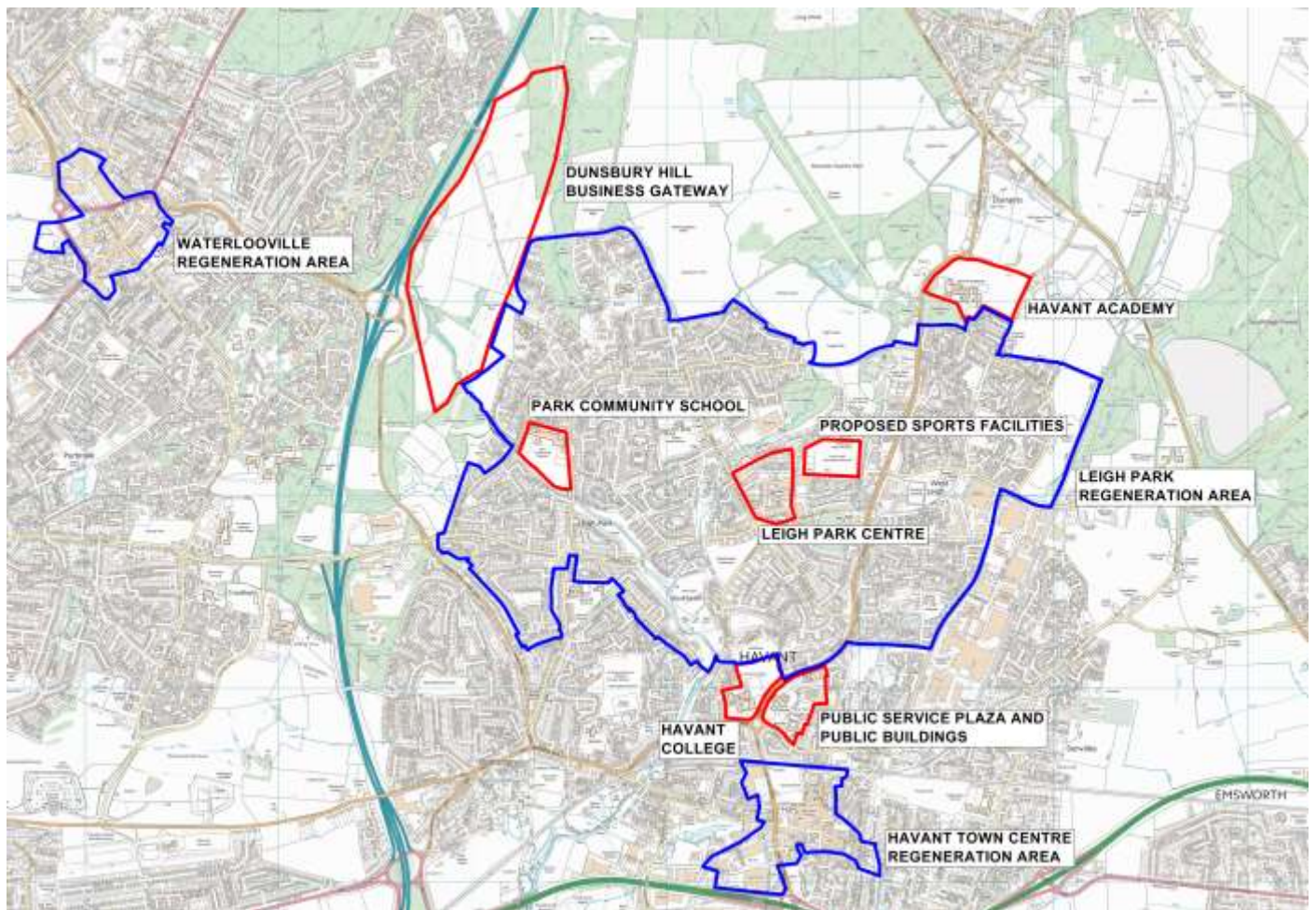
Conclusion

Leigh Park centre is at the heart of the community, a community that is just about managing in many aspects of life, in others it needs public support. A successful bid for the £320,000 of enabling grant to de-risk the early stages of this regeneration scheme is crucial for the transformation of Leigh Park centre and wider Leigh Park.

Development values in Leigh Park are relatively lower but not so much that no new development is taking place; new homes are now being built as the area is becoming more attractive. Leigh Park centre is walkable to the mainline Havant rail station, existing property is very good value with the predominant 3 bedroom homes selling for around £180,000. The intensification of development in the centre is sustainable and would deliver new homes and facilities that create positive social outcomes and this could be given the kick start it needs for less than the cost of two homes in Leigh Park.

The relatively small public investment would pay for specialist work to galvanise the community, work that is already starting with Community First, create a new hub building that brings together the services that the community need and create 150+ new homes.

Appendix 1 – Map of Leigh Park Centre in relation to Havant Borough





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Friday 17 March 2017

ESTATE REGENERATION PROGRAMME: OFFER AND EXPECTATIONS

Dear Andrew Biltcliffe,

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is issuing a £320,000 enabling grant and £20,000 capacity building grant to Havant Borough Council under powers set out in section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 to support the work outlined in your bid for estate regeneration enabling grant funding, and subsequent emails to confirm project deliverables.

The enabling grant is for local authorities and housing associations registered as providers of social housing in the early stages of estate regeneration schemes. The funding should be committed this financial year (2016/17) and can be used to pay for, for example, feasibility studies, viability assessments, master planning, community engagement and partner or procurement advice.

The capacity building grant is for local authorities to build commercial skills and capacity to support the delivery of estate regeneration schemes. The funding should be committed this financial year (2016/17).

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

Kerry Williams
Estate Regeneration